

Long Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

Prepared for the

Saskatchewan Library Workers' Steering Committee,
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)



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CUPE Research

Introduction

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is the largest union in Saskatchewan representing over 24,000 public sector workers. Our members work in health care, school boards, universities, municipalities, libraries, community-based organizations, Legal Aid, the Human Rights Commission and other sectors.

Our union is also the largest union in the country. At the national level, CUPE represents over 500,000 public sector workers.

CUPE is known as a union that fights hard for better wages and benefits for its members. We are also known as a union that lobbies for better social policies and programs for all workers. And as a union whose members are mostly women, we have been on the front lines for pay equity, improved parental and family leaves and better pensions for women.

We have developed this document to make our case for the provincial government to expand the government's pay and internal equity policy to library workers. The library sector is predominantly a female workplace and, as in other female-dominated workplaces, the jobs in this sector are woefully underpaid.

Our document illustrates how poorly paid library jobs are in comparison to male-dominated municipal jobs. We strongly believe that the low wages are the result of gender discrimination and that the provincial government must play a role in reversing this discrimination. Library workers who work for the provincial and federal governments have already benefited from pay equity adjustments and similar adjustments are long overdue for other library workers.

The Library Sector

In the province of Saskatchewan, there are seven regional libraries, a northern library system and two municipal libraries (Regina and Saskatoon). Our public libraries have very high usage: the total circulation in the province's

libraries in 1997 was 10,964,693 items or 11.44 items per capita¹. In that same year, there was a total of 638.5 full-time equivalent staff that worked in those ten libraries providing valuable information and educational services to the public. The ratio of staff to the library population in 1997 was one staff for every 1,548 people.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees represents workers in eight libraries in the province: Regina, Saskatoon, Lakeland, Palliser, Parkland, Southeast, Wapiti, and John M. Cuelenaere².

There is no doubt that our libraries provide valuable services to the public. Libraries play a vital role in our communities providing resources to all citizens, augmenting the learning opportunities of both children and adults, assisting students, small businesses and others in research and allowing free access to information in a world where information is increasingly becoming commercialized.

A Citizens First survey conducted in 1998 confirms the high perception of libraries in the public's mind. The survey found that Canadians ranked fire departments first and libraries second for their quality of service³. Canadians' satisfaction with library services was higher than other public and private services.

The high provincial library circulation figures for 1997 -- almost 11 million items -- illustrate just how valuable libraries are to the public. Libraries help make our communities better places to live and enhance the personal lives of those who use the services. Undeniably, libraries are key to a democratic, egalitarian society because they ensure all citizens have access to a wide range of information and knowledge.

¹ Saskatchewan Library Systems Statistical Summary 1997, Saskatchewan Libraries web site (www.lib.sk.ca).

² Although John M. Cuelenaere public library is part of the Wapiti Regional Library, it has a separate board and a separate collective agreement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

³ Kenneth Kernaghan, *Rediscovering Public Service: Recognizing the Value of an Essential Institution*, The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, appendix B.

The demands of library jobs

Most library positions require high levels of formal education as well as an aptitude for continual learning and skills advancement. The minimum education required in our libraries is grade 12 but many library positions now require a two-year library tech certificate or a bachelor's degree. Librarians must have a master's degree in library sciences. Increasingly we have seen library workers with specialization in areas such as adult education.

With the constant changes in information technologies, library workers are expected to quickly learn new technologies and information systems. There has been a tremendous shift in recent years from print material to electronic material and electronic data bases and we have not only had to learn these new systems but to teach the public as well. For example, as few as three or four years ago public internet access was not available in our libraries and now it is widely used.

Our members are information specialists, research assistants, fact finders, literacy trainers, English as a Second Language trainers, children's story tellers, puppeteers, and much more!

Many people may not be aware of the extent of physical demands and social skills required in library jobs. Library work is not sedentary work. In fact, a library can be considered an industrial workplace because of the physical demands involved in heavy lifting, shelving and moving books and trolleys.

Library workers also face many occupational health hazards such as repetitive strain injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, harassment and even violence from the public. Because libraries are free and therefore very accessible public places, people from all social backgrounds, including those with social or mental health problems, frequent our libraries. Library workers must have the social skills to deal with a range of people who may have limited English, poor literacy skills or basic social skills. With the increased use of the internet in our public libraries, at times we deal with patrons who are viewing inappropriate material or who refuse to accept time limits on the internet. It is not uncommon for police to enter our libraries to remove violent or abusive patrons.

We believe that our libraries should be accessible to all; however, employers and the government must be cognizant of the tremendous social and communication skills required in library jobs.

Library wages: how low can they get?

The high education levels and tremendous skills of library workers have not, unfortunately, translated into well-paying jobs. There are no standard provincial wage rates in the library sector and as a result there is large variance of wages among the various libraries.

For example, the hourly wage rate in 2002 for entry level positions in the libraries ranged from \$6.85 for an Assistant Branch Librarian at the Lakeland Regional Library to \$11.68 for a Library Assistant I at the Saskatoon Public Library. Converted to annual salaries, that is the equivalent of \$13,524 for the Assistant Branch Librarian and \$22,025 for the Library Assistant I⁴ (based on full-time, full-year hours).

The table below illustrates that the salaries for an Assistant Branch Librarian in Lloydminster and for a Library Clerk 1 in Estevan are below the poverty line for a single person in communities with a population of less than 30,000. The salaries of the entry level positions in Regina, Saskatoon and Yorkton could support a single person but would be below the poverty line for a family of 3 persons in communities with population between 100,000 and 499,000⁵.

There is no doubt that library wages do not provide a living wage. It is important to point out that these figures are based on full-time hours and that, unfortunately, a high number of library workers do not work full-time hours. For example, at Regina Public Library one-half of our members work part-time.

⁴ Based on 37.5 hours per week at Lakeland and a 36.25 hours per week for Saskatoon.

⁵ National Council of Welfare, *Fact Sheet: Poverty Lines 2002*, website: www.ncwcncbes.net.

Table 1
Saskatchewan Library Entry Level Annual Salaries
Compared to Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-off Line, 2002

City	Library entry level position	Annual salary 2002	2002 LICO* Single person	2002 LICO Family of 3
Regina	PS Clerk	\$ 20,584.00	\$ 16,516	\$ 25,676
Saskatoon	Lib Ass't 1	\$ 22,025.00	\$ 16,516	\$ 25,676
Lloydminster	Ass't Branch Librarian	\$ 13,524.00	\$ 15,261	\$ 23,725
Estevan	Lib Clerk 1	\$ 12,867.40	\$ 15,261	\$ 23,275
Yorkton	Tech Services Clerk	\$ 21,723.00	\$ 15,261	\$ 23,275

Source: National Council of Welfare, Poverty Lines 2002; CUPE collective agreements
 CUPE Research

* LICO stands for the Low Income Cut Off Line.

Low wages for women have many implications. Women are more likely to head a single-parent family and low wages mean fewer resources to raise their children.

Low wages also guarantee poor pensions when library workers retire. One of our members who has worked for 11 years at one of the regional libraries would be eligible to retire in three years at the age of 61 with an unreduced pension. After 14 years of service her lifetime monthly pension would be \$432.23 with a bridge of \$116.34 payable to age 65.

Another library worker who has worked almost 30 years in a Saskatchewan library would receive a pension of \$958 per month if she retired this year.

Low wages are the result of gender discrimination

Library work is predominantly women's work. There are very few jobs in the library sector that are considered traditionally male jobs: some maintenance positions, drivers and computer technicians. Historically jobs where women have been concentrated pay less than jobs that are considered men's work.

The low salaries in the library sector are the result of gender discrimination. Library workers' pay is not determined on the basis of the value of

the work, the skills or education involved to do the job, nor the effort and responsibilities required.

The traditionally male jobs in the municipal sector are almost universally paid at a higher rate than the traditionally female jobs in the library sector. Municipal and library workers provide equally valuable services to their communities yet are compensated radically differently. Our research examining the wage rates of entry level positions in the libraries and 'outside worker' positions in municipalities shows that library positions are paid much less than municipal jobs. For example, in two of our small cities, the library workers earn half of what an outside worker in the same municipality earns.

Table 2 provides a comparison of the starting wage rate and the top rate paid in entry level positions in the libraries and corresponding municipalities. Without exception, the municipal wage rates are higher than the library wage rates. Not only do the municipal jobs pay better but, in addition, it takes less time to reach the top wage rate for the position. A municipal labourer in most cases would only have to work for one year, sometimes up to three years, before being paid the top rate for the job. Most library clerks, on the other hand, would work five or six years before being paid the top rate (see table 2 on next page).

The long-term impact of the wage gap

Over time the difference in wages between mostly male and mostly female jobs takes its toll. The difference of a dollar or two an hour becomes even more significant when one considers that municipal jobs, filled mostly by men, are paid at a higher hourly rate over a longer workweek. The weekly hours of work in the labourer positions tend to be longer (40 hours) than for library jobs (36 or 37.5 hours). Once the number of increments is also factored into the equation, women in entry-level library jobs earn tens of thousands of dollars less than men in entry-level municipal jobs over a five year period.

Table 2
Comparison of Entry Level Hourly Wages,
Saskatchewan Municipal and Library Workers, by Region, Year 2002

MUNICIPALITY	COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT	CLASSIFICATION	START RATE 2002	TOP RATE 2002	# OF STEPS	YEARS TO MAX
Yorkton	City of Yorkton/ Local 342	Labourer I	\$12.24	\$12.92	3	3
	Parkland Regional Library/Local 1904	Technical Services Clerk I	\$11.14	\$11.55	2	2
Battlefords Lloydminster	City of North Battleford/Local 287	Labourer	\$11.97	\$12.90	3	3
	City of Lloydminster Local 1015	Labourer I	\$12.60	\$14.24	4	2
	Lakeland Regional Library/Local 3077	Ass't Branch Librarian	\$6.85	\$8.72	11	5
Moose Jaw	City of Moose Jaw Local 9	Permanent Labourer	\$14.90	\$14.90	1	Immediate
	Palliser Regional Library/Local 9	Ass't Branch Librarian	\$7.38	\$9.00	6	6
Weyburn Estevan	City of Weyburn/ Local 90	Labourer I	\$9.11	\$11.73	3	1
	City of Estevan/ Local 726	Public Works Labourer	\$14.78	\$14.78	1	Immediate
	Southeast Regional Library/Local 2174	Clerk I	\$7.07	\$8.67	5	5
Prince Albert	City of P.A./Local 160	Labourer I	\$14.57	\$14.84	2	1
	JMC/ Local 1788	Clerk I	\$9.72	\$11.10	4	4
	Wapiti Regional Library/Local 1788	Clerk I	\$8.00	\$9.85	6	6
Saskatoon	City of Saskatoon/ Local 859	Labourer	\$12.62	\$16.03	3	3
	Saskatoon Public Library/Local 2669	Library Assistant 1	\$11.68	\$14.01	5	5
Regina	City of Regina/ Local 21	Labourer	12.73	15.24	2	2
	Regina Public Library/Local 1594	PS Clerk	\$10.92	\$13.02	5	5

Table 3 illustrates the difference in annual salaries between library and municipal entry-level jobs in four different cities. The results are shocking. For example a Public Works Labourer at the City of Estevan *earns more than twice the annual salary* of Library Clerk at the Southeast Regional Library. Over a five year period, a Public Works Labourer would have earned \$82,095 more than the Library Clerk. That would be enough money to buy a house or put two children through university.

Table 3
Annual, Percentage and Cumulative Wage Gap
Between entry level municipal and library positions,
Selected Cities, for the year 2002

CITY	ENTRY LEVEL POSITION	ANNUAL SALARY START RATE	GAP IN DOLLARS	RATIO	ANNUAL SALARY TOP RATE	GAP IN DOLLARS	RATIO	YEARS TO MAX.	GAP OVER 5 YEARS
Saskatoon	Library Ass't 1	\$22,017			\$26,409			5	
	Labourer	\$26,250	\$4,233	83.9	\$33,342	\$6,933	79.2	3	\$35,423.52
Yorkton	Tech Services Clerk	\$21,715			\$22,531			2	
	Labourer 1	\$25,459	\$3,744	85.3	\$26,874	\$4,343	83.8	3	\$20,408.20
Estevan	Library Clerk 1	\$12,867			\$15,779			5	
	Public Works Labourer	\$30,742	\$17,875.40	41.9	\$30,742	\$14,963	51.3	Immediate	\$82,095.00
Lloydminster	Ass't Branch Librarian	\$13,514			\$17,004			6	
	Labourer 1	\$27,238	\$13,724	49.6	\$29,619	\$12,615	57.4	2	\$70,695.12

Source: CUPE collective agreement wage schedules
 CUPE Research

The above table shows the tremendous wage gap between library and municipal workers. The narrowest gap between the traditional male and female municipal jobs exists in Yorkton, where a Technical Services Clerk earns 85.3

percent of the annual salary of a Public Works Labourer. A Library Clerk 1 in Estevan, however, earns only 41.9 cents for every dollar a Public Works Labourer at the City makes.

The wage gap between library and municipal jobs exists even at higher-level classifications. At the Regina Public Library, for example, a librarian with the required Masters' degree (four year undergraduate degree and two year Masters' degree) is paid a start rate of between \$39,709.90 and \$49,717.74 annually. At the City of Regina, a Senior Planner with a four-year university degree earns between \$52,374 and \$65,397 annually.

In fact, the Human Resources Department at the City of Regina did not have any job descriptions that required a Masters' degree. The requirement for a Senior Policy Advisor previously had been a Masters' degree but that has been recently changed to an undergraduate degree and relevant experience. That position (Senior Social Development Consultant) pays a maximum annual salary of \$65,397, significantly higher than librarians with a Masters' degree.

Compared to the average earnings of men and women at a provincial and national basis, the wage gap between the library/municipal sector is far wider. Across Canada, women working full-time, full-year earn on average 71.6 percent of what men working full-time, full-year earn. In Saskatchewan, the earnings ratio is 72.6 percent.

Table 4
Comparison of Women's and Men's Full-Time, Full-Year Average Earnings Saskatchewan and Canada, 2001

	WOMEN'S AVG FT/FY EARNINGS	MEN'S AVG. FT/FY EARNINGS	EARNINGS RATIO
Canada	\$ 35,258	\$ 49,250	71.6
Saskatchewan	\$ 30,157	\$ 41,548	72.6

Sources: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 202-0102.
CUPE Research

Pay equity for library workers in other jurisdictions

Library workers in other jurisdictions and in other sectors of this province have been included in pay equity plans and received significant wage increases.

In other provinces with pay equity legislation, library jobs were compared to traditionally male municipal jobs. Because there are few traditionally male jobs within the library (maintenance, drivers, computer technicians), other provinces had to find an outside male comparator and those were mostly found in the municipal sector.

In Mississauga, for example, both internal and external male comparators were used when pay equity was implemented in the library. A Library Assistant II (female position) was compared to a Courier (predominantly male position) and saw her wages increased by \$5,000 a year. Senior Librarians were compared to City Planners resulting in a \$10,000 a year increase in salary.

At the City of Toronto library worker jobs were compared to traditionally male inside city jobs. Pages saw their wages increase from \$7.86 to \$9.76, Library Technician CC42 went from \$17.12 to \$20.07 an hour, Library Assistant CLA11 went from \$17.38 to \$20.75 an hour, and Special Collections Assistant went from \$16.19 to \$19.56 an hour.

Employees at the Provincial Library and in libraries within the provincial public service were included in the government's internal equity and pay equity policy implemented in October 1998. Library Technicians saw their wages increase by 23 percent and the Librarian 2 classification received increases of 13 percent.

Table 5
Impact of Pay Equity Policy Framework on Library Wages
Within the Saskatchewan Public Service

Job	Old Plan Hourly wage rate	Oct. 1, 1998 After Pay equity Hourly wage rate	% increase
Library Tech 1	\$14.15	\$17.41	23.0
Library Tech 2	\$15.19	\$18.80	23.8
Librarian 1	\$19.36	\$24.13	24.6
Librarian 2	\$21.36	\$24.13	13.0
Librarian 3	\$24.10	\$26.54	10.1
Librarian 4	\$26.06	\$32.12	23.3

Source: SGEU

In the federal public service, librarians employed by the federal government won pay equity adjustments under the widely publicized PSAC Pay Equity settlement. The Library Service group, of all groups within PSAC, had the highest pay equity settlement averaging more than \$5,000 a year. Librarian classifications were rated and found to be worth between 274 and 600 points. These points fall between many of the 56 male dominated jobs in the federal public service – jobs like Agricultural Officers and Air Traffic Controllers.

Library workers across the country and in this province have been included in pay equity plans because there was recognition of the gender-based wage discrimination. The provincial government must act now to include library workers under its pay and internal equity policy framework.

Why libraries should be covered under the pay equity policy framework

Over the last number of years our union has attempted to improve the wages of library workers at the bargaining table with limited success. Even if library workers achieved the same percentage wage increases as municipal

workers, this would not bridge the wage gap but instead would contribute to a widening of the gap because percentage increases provide more money to the higher wage earner.

The best way to address the low wages paid to women in the library sector is through pay equity. In this document, we have made comparisons between the entry-level positions in the libraries and municipal sectors to illustrate the tremendous wage gap between the two sets of municipal workers. Our examples, however, are not based on a gender-neutral job evaluation plan. A gender-neutral job evaluation system would be more comprehensive and would evaluate all library positions on four factors: skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. The purpose of our comparison is to simply illustrate that a person entering a traditionally male municipal job would earn significantly more than someone entering a traditionally female job at the library in the same city.

Fixing the wage gap will not happen until municipal and provincial governments better fund our libraries. Municipal governments have responsibility for libraries under Sections 43 and 44 of *The Library Act* and they fund the majority of library budgets through grants and mill rate levies. The provincial government also provides some funding to our municipal and regional libraries. Municipal governments also have direct impact on library budgets and decisions because they appoint voting representatives to library boards. For example, two members of Regina city council sit on the library board of directors and in Saskatoon, the city does payroll for the library.

A provincial gender-neutral job evaluation plan for libraries using male comparators in the municipality will not happen unless the provincial government is involved. The library workers at both Regina Public Library and Saskatoon Public Library went on strike to achieve a commitment from their employers to embark on a pay equity process. We urge the provincial government to include libraries under the pay equity policy framework and to provide the necessary funding to help initiate the process.

When the government first implemented the pay and internal equity policy, direct government employees and the Crown corporations were covered under the framework. Recently the government expanded the policy to the health

sector. Now that the government has broadened the scope of the policy framework to the broader public sector we believe that it is time to expand the policy once again to female-dominated sectors like the libraries. This is a much smaller sector than the health care sector and the application of the policy to our municipal and regional libraries would have a far-reaching and positive impact on women in this sector.

Conclusion

This document has clearly shown how library workers are undervalued and underpaid. Many library workers in this province earn poverty-level wages and after years of public service they will be rewarded with poverty level pensions.

The predominantly female library workforce is underpaid because of historical gender wage discrimination. This wage discrimination must be addressed so that women (and men) who chose to work in this valuable public service are paid on the basis of what their jobs are worth, not on the basis of discrimination.

Library workers who are fortunate to be employed by the provincial or federal government have already benefited from pay equity adjustments. Library workers at our province's universities are in the midst of job evaluation and will be receiving pay equity adjustments in the near future. It has become difficult for our libraries to recruit and retain skilled library workers because the wages are so low compared to library jobs in the provincial or federal public service or private sector.

The provincial government's pay equity policy framework has benefited many women in the public sector who had been underpaid for years because they were in pink ghetto jobs. We urge the government to expand the policy to libraries, so that women in this sector may finally be paid what they are worth.